

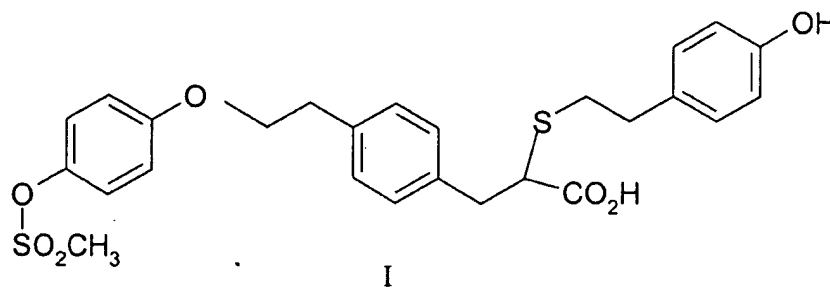
IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

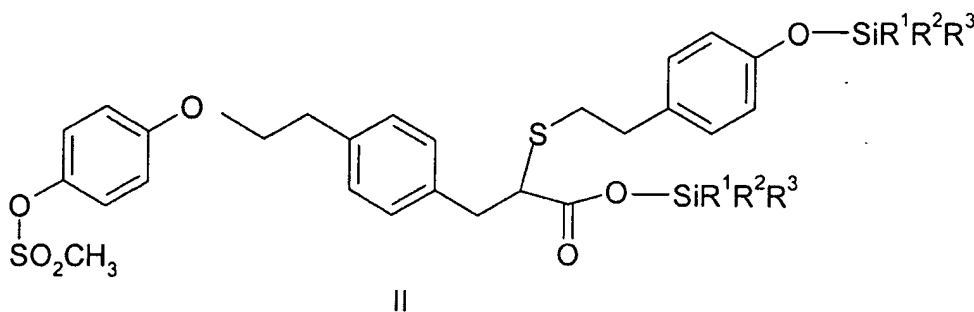
Listing of claims:

Claims 1-5 (cancelled).

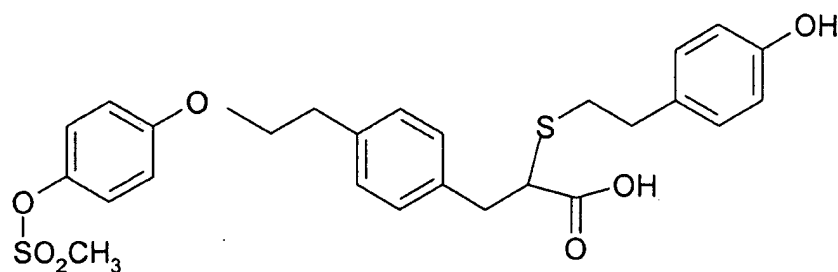
Claim 6 (currently amended): A process for the preparation of substantially racemic 2-{[2-(4-hydroxyphenyl)ethyl]thio}-3-[4-(2-{4-[(methylsulfonyl)oxy]phenoxy}ethyl)-phenyl]propanoic acid according to claim 4 comprising reacting a compound of formula I



enriched in one enantiomer with a chlorosilane of formula $\text{ClSiR}^1\text{R}^2\text{R}^3$ in which R^1 , R^2 , and R^3 independently represent a C_{1-6} alkyl group or aryl in the presence of a nitrogenous base in the presence of an inert solvent at a temperature in the range of 0 to 150°C to give a compound of formula II

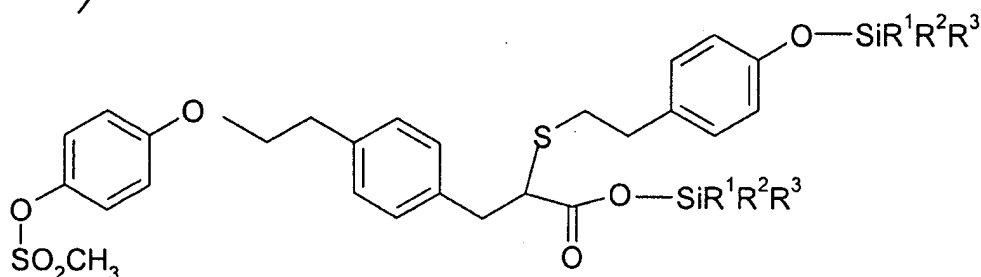


in which R^1 , R^2 , and R^3 are previously defined which is hydrolysed to give a racemic compound of formula III



III

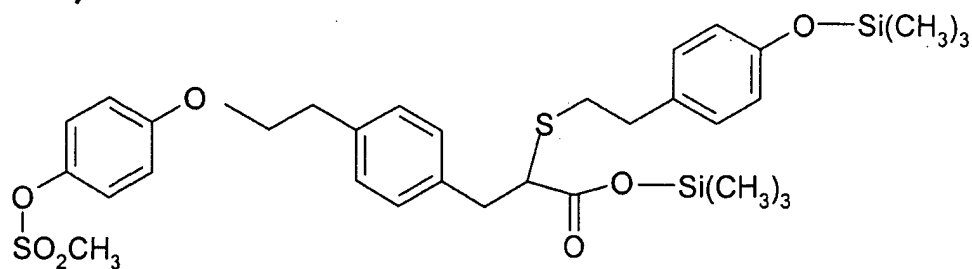
²
Claim ~~7~~ (original): A compound of formula II



II

wherein R¹, R², and R³ independently represent a C₁₋₆ alkyl group or aryl.

³
Claim ~~8~~ (original): A compound of formula IV



IV

⁴
Claim ~~9~~ (new): A process according to claim ~~6~~ wherein the chlorosilane is selected from: chlorotriethylsilane, chlorodimethyl*tert*-butylsilane, chlorotriphenylsilane and chlorodimethylphenyl silane.

⁵
Claim ~~10~~ (new): A process according to claim ~~6~~¹ wherein the chlorosilane is chlorotrimethylsilane.

⁶
Claim ~~11~~ (new): A process according to claim ~~6~~¹ wherein the nitrogenous base is selected from 1,8 diazabicyclo[5.4.0] undec-7-ene, a trialkylamine, an optionally substituted pyridine or an optionally substituted imidazole.

⁷
Claim ~~12~~ (new): A process according to claim ~~11~~⁶ wherein the nitrogenous base is 1,8 diazabicyclo[5.4.0] undec-7-ene.